



News Release

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Federal Cuts Force IDES to Close Seven Offices March 1 *Closures First Announced in January; Separate from Sequestration*

CHICAGO – Mounting federal budget reductions require the Illinois Department of Employment Security to close seven offices effective March 1, the IDES said today.

The closures, first announced in January, are not connected to potential service reductions should Congress not compromise to avoid the March 1 sequestration. Rather, they are tied to other federal budget reductions, including those connected to falling unemployment insurance claims. The IDES is nearly 100 percent federally funded.

The March 1 office closures involve Centralia, DeKalb, East St. Louis, Galesburg, Jacksonville, Mattoon and Murphysboro. Of these, IDES shares space with local partners in all but Murphysboro. In these shared locations, the local partners will continue to deliver services as long as they wish, pursuant to landlord agreements.

Although IDES will not provide services in these offices after Feb. 28, staff will continue to work in the locations temporarily until the layoff is complete. That firm date is difficult to predict when considering collective bargaining requirements. In an effort to communicate as clearly as possible while respecting the uncertain layoff completion date, IDES chose March 1 to discontinue walk-in and telephone services in the seven specific offices. The 192 individuals to be laid off are expected to have the opportunity to fill open positions elsewhere in state government. Of the 192, more than half are in Chicago.

A \$20 million federal funding reduction and an \$8 million state increase in health insurance have stressed the Department's budget. The office closings are among the results. The closings were based on several criteria, including work-load comparisons and lease considerations. The closings bring to 15 the number of offices shuttered for budgetary reasons in the past 18 months, four of which were in Chicago as well as Freeport, Litchfield, Mt. Vernon and Pekin. Additionally, 10 outpost locations were closed and more than 200 intermittent positions have not been scheduled since Oct. 1, 2012, the beginning of the federal budget year.

Answers to specific unemployment insurance questions are available at www.ides.illinois.gov or the call center.

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